

The Mustang Monthly

Volume II, Issue 9

September 2006

S1 Pat on the Back Postings!

Congratulations to Our Promotees through 1 October

A Co
SGT Adams
SGT Garcia

B Co

CW4 Baker
1LT Messare
D Co

SFC Strange
SGT Cipolla
SPC Baily
SPC Mitchell
SPC Cash
SPC Steams
SPC Heckman
SPC Pulford
PFC Geranen
PFC Gilbert
PFC Ross

Continued on the back page...

From the Commander's Desk

Dear Mustang Family,

It looks as if we are approaching the end of a long and dusty trail that will end up with a reunion with family and friends. This month we watched C Co board our aircraft as they made their way south on the way home. Their job here was noted by everyone as professional and first rate. They are all true heroes and we thank them for a job well done.

The rest of us are staring at the 9th inning as we get ready to welcome our counterparts from 1st CAV. The weather is even starting to cool off and for a bunch of great soldiers it marks the time for them to go home. As we begin the final days of supporting

the division, our thoughts are of climbing onto that

still have a job to do here which we will un-



plane as we kick off the remaining dust from our boots. It is too difficult to sum up all the vast accomplishments of our soldiers and crews so I won't even try until later. We

doubtedly do well, but our thoughts are still of home.

LTC David Fleckenstein
Mustang 06

From the CSMs Desk

Hello from Camp Taji!

October has finally fallen upon us, and we are all looking forward to returning to Ft. Hood. Although there is still much to be done here, and we all try to focus on the mission at hand, it is difficult not to look for-

ward to the

final flight that carries us home. We have all made friends, some that we will have for the rest of our lives, but we all have changed, and will forever be a different person for the year we spent in Iraq.

By the time this newsletter goes to distribution, C Co will already be home.

What a sight, to see the soldiers of C Co, and a few from A and D Cos, depart for home. Everyone was smiles! They had an initial let down, as their departure from Camp Taji was delayed for two days, but when the day finally came, they couldn't keep the grin off their faces. They all arrived early for their manifest call, only to have to sit

CSMs Desk cont...

in an open building for two hours waiting for the aircraft that would be the first on their long journey home. But they didn't mind – they were going home! Upon entering the building to wish them a safe trip home and a last farewell from Camp Taji, I immediately became aware of the uncontrollable excitement that surrounded the entire group. The smiles that couldn't be wiped off if they tried, the bright, wide eyes, and the jovial manner they had with each other.

The wait to be called forward seemed to pass so quickly for me, but I was staying. I am certain it seemed an eternity to the Soldiers. At last, they were called forward,

and formed two lines on Taji Pad to load onto two CH47s – that weren't even on the Pad yet! As they waited, the two CH47s came into view, and everyone put on their gear and picked up their bags, probably faster than they ever had before. But the aircraft couldn't land on Taji Pad. Two MEDEVAC helicopters were sitting there. These helicopters, we were all too familiar with – the nightly routine run. It shouldn't take long – they only needed to load up and go. But tonight, it took forever. What could possibly be taking them so long to load the patients and take off? They weren't doing anything – close the door and go!! After what seemed an eternity, they were off, and the CH47s lifted off to reposition. Before they were even on the ground and doors open, soldiers were running to get on the aircraft.

All bets were off, and the only thing that mattered was getting on the aircraft. In record time, both CH47s were loaded, doors closed and they were off! Our first group of soldiers was on their way home!

It was bittersweet to see them go – once again our unit was split, but they were going home. After a year in Iraq, their time was over. God speed and congratulations to C Co and the few from A and D Cos. We will see you on the other side when the rest of us comes home.

CSM Laura L. Perdices

From the Blackjack Card Table

Hello Blackjack Families-

September has come and gone and as the days are getting shorter, so too is our time here and before you know it we will all be back at Ft Hood. The company's return to Ft Hood has already begun with the return of our early re-deployers; CPT Stahl, CW3 Muller, CW2 Barnes, CW2 Klastenegger, CW2 Thomas and SPC Gundayao. It was an early morning at Starker Gym, but

lit up the night.

The company reflected on Hurricane Katrina and the role that the Blackjacks played in rescue efforts. Crewmembers participating in the aerial relief of New Orleans were presented with the Sikorsky Rescue Pin this month to commemorate their achievements a year ago. The Rescue Pin is quite an honor; it is only worn by Aircrews who have

Soldiers' and families' smiles

used Sikorsky Aircraft in rescues.

On October 1, 2006 we had the honor of promoting 2 Blackjacks. SPC Casey Adams was promoted to Sergeant and Sergeant Enrique Garcia was promoted to Staff Sergeant. Congratulations and good luck!

Redeployment efforts are in full swing here at Camp Taji as the company starts to pack up their equipment in preparation for our return to Ft Hood. Many long days are ahead of us, but our spirits are high. A big thanks goes to the Blackjack

"Redeployment Team" of CW2 Elliot Morelan, CW2 Adan Caballero, CW2 Richard Montoya and SFC DaWayne Piper who have been burning the midnight oil to get all the paperwork and equipment ready for shipment. Thanks guys, we couldn't have done it without you.

In closing, thank you to all the families for your unending support of all the Blackjacks throughout the deployment. The next 30-45 days

will be very stressful on both you and your Soldier as we move through the redeployment process. Please be patient with us as information will change, but we will try to keep all the families updated as soon as changes occur. I invite all the families to stay in touch with the FRG during this fi-

nal stage of the redeployment; they will do their best to answer any questions you may have.



Till then, Good Luck and God Bless

CPT John Miller

Blackjack 06

1SG Mark Grumbach

Blackjack 07

From The Clydesdale Stables

Hello to all the Clydesdale families back home! September was another busy month for the Soldiers of Bravo, 2-4 and they continue to impress and achieve results each night far beyond expectations! The maintenance team has been kicking in to overdrive keeping the fleet in top shape this month. Throughout a month of mission changes, surges and unexpected hurdles, the whole team certainly rose to the challenge. I could not be prouder of this com-

pany and recognition for their mission accomplishment is well deserved. Assisting in the first leg of onward movement home for the MEDEVAC team was certainly a highlight for us all because it signifies a move towards our own journey home.

I certainly don't have to tell you how hard this separation has been for us over the last ten months. The end is finally in sight but my mission

doesn't stop until I bring the team home to you. The Clydesdales are chomping at the bit to get back to you

and I have heard wonderful things about the preparation and ideas for homecoming. Please, keep up the awesome support and team spirit back home, you may never know just how far it impacts us here each day. The Clydesdale team is still mission focused but they now have the added task of downsizing a year's accumulation of goodies and "must haves" in their rooms in preparation for loading the connexes to return home.

Yes, excitement is certainly in the air here at Camp Taji. Redeployment has definitely become the buzz word around here and I'm sure the "latest" is blazing a fire across the home wires as well. However, I



must offer the same caution/advice to those of you back home that I tell our Soldiers here- take every timeline and plan as just that- a plan. Make no mistake, we are fighting a war over here and the team is truly impacting the fight each and every-

day. While plans to bring us home are being made, redeployment is a fluid thing and is subject to change at any time. I certainly know well that no one likes to be jerked around, but we must all remember that until the planes touch down on Texas soil, the plan could change. Please be patient with us as we are working to pass along all known information as it becomes available.

Due to unfortunate medical circumstances, a member of our team returned home ahead of schedule this month. SSG Jerry Rivera was an integral member of our crew here and was certainly a pillar in the company's morale. We are sorry that he was unable to complete the mission and he will certainly be missed around here. We all wish him a full and speedy recovery

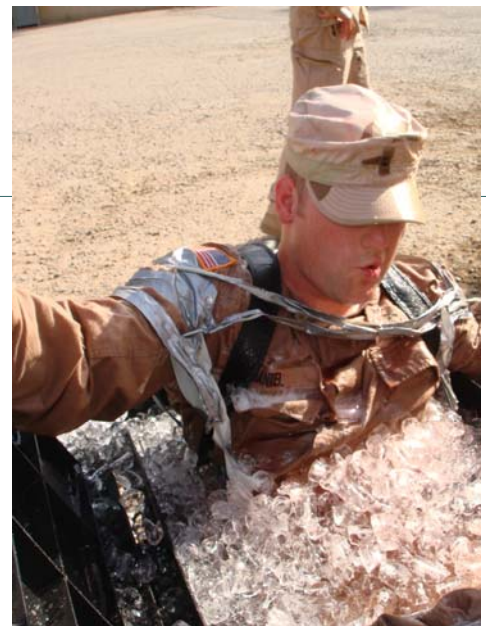
with his family and trust you will show them that trademark Clydesdale support that has brought us this far.

Congratulations are in order for SGT Alec Sayakhom and his family on his 1 September promotion and acceptance into the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps. Also, a great pat on the back is due to 1LT Scott Messare and his family on his very first promotion in the US Army on September 15th. Also,

CW2 Matt Daniel achieved Night Vision Goggle Pilot-In-Command this month and the company was certainly happy to treat him to a rousing "celebration" for his accomplishment. Please join me in congratulating these Soldiers for a job well done and in thanking their families for the continued support that makes it all possible for us.

CLYDESDALES!

CPT Sherri Sharpe



From the MEDEVAC Launch

This is the last edition of the C Co newsletter before our redeployment home. It has been quite a year. Every member will leave Iraq with a sense of accomplishment knowing we've been a part of something great. To be a member of a unit that has spearheaded Aviation Transformation as the first MEDEVAC Company in the first General Support Aviation Battalion has been an honor. We will leave OIF 05-07 with our heads held high knowing we've helped the individuals that matter most: the Soldiers outside the wire.

As a unit we have flown over 3000 missions, totaling 5400 hours, saving the lives of 4600 US and Coal-

ition Soldiers and Civilians, multiplying combat effectiveness. We will leave Iraq knowing we've made a difference. We will leave our sweat and tears soaked into the soil from the time committed in support of the war fight over the past year of Iraq as it continues to fight for its freedom and supports its democratic ambitions.

We will leave knowing we've given our all on the field of battle and left nothing behind. As our feet leave Iraq and we return to the great state of Texas, we know we have lived the mentality of MEDEVAC throughout history..."When I Have Your Wounded." Signifying the undying passion for life and support of

the Soldiers and civilians throughout this country and throughout wars past, when we have your wounded, we will say with our chests out and our heads held high: Mission Complete. DUSTOFF!

-V/R

-1LT Wingate

C Co (AA), 2-4 GSAB



After having the deployment date pushed to the right a few times the old 571st Med from

Ft. Carson, Colorado has arrived to Camp Taji, Iraq. The new C co 2/227's Company Commander, Maj Guy Gierhart, and First Sergeant, SFC Jonathan Spiller, are pleased to report the company is present and ready

for duty. We have had the pleasure of working with our counterparts from C co 2/4 for the last few weeks to complete RIP/TOA operations. C co 2/4 made us feel welcome and gave us the tools we needed to make the transition of medevac operations in our AO as fluid as possible. We are very appreciative to Maj Ortiz, 1SG Stribling, and C co 2/4 for their efforts to ensure our assume mission date was a possibility. They made our integration a true success.

C co 2/227 is eager to get

the ball rolling, so to speak. The company is well rounded with some OIF veterans returning for their second and third tours in Iraq. The newest members of the company are grateful to have the vets around for guidance and mentorship. We look forward to supporting MNCI and honoring our company's motto "To save a life" during OIF 06-08.

DUSTOFF!

From the Maverick Empire

Hello to all the friends and family of the Mavericks. We are well into our eleventh month of the deployment and your soldiers are performing at their best. Each day we repair the aircraft that are instrumental to daily operations here in Iraq.

As most of you are aware Monday marked the anniversary of

five years ago on 9-11. Here at camp Taji we remembered the day with a memorial 5K run. A chaplain from one of the support brigades offered a few memories and solemn thoughts to begin the morning. A female SGT from the finance battalion sang the National Anthem as the sun was rising. We then paused, in the midst of combat, and offered a moment of si-

the
tragic
events of

lence to reflect and remember. In all twelve Soldiers from Delta company ran the five kilometer course, each was presented a t-shirt for their effort. The runners were: PVT Ruthford, PVT Parker, PV2 Abbot, PFC Gonzales, SPC Pulford, SPC Neal, SPC Hunsacker, SPC Dalton, SSG Decesare, SSG McMillian, CW4 Connor, and CPT Cerchio.

Well into our eleventh month, thoughts of re-deployment are on everyone's

mind. On September 10th we packed, inspected and sealed seven containers of equipment to be re-deployed. While we still have over a month and half left I think that the first containers being sealed signaled that the end is near. With that said, we look forward to seeing you all soon!

Take Care,

Maverick 06



From the Griffins' Den

Maintenance Platoon

Now it is time to say goodbye as this will be our last newsletter. With that comes a little sadness, but not much as we realize this means we are much closer to making it home. We have been continuing to work hard on maintaining a high level of support and keeping our "heads in the game". Our main focus was directed towards providing QA/QC support for the E/111th Louisiana National Guard in order to aide their preparations for

redeployment and creating a sustainment PLL, bench stock and shop stock for our 1st Cavalry replacements. Overall, our goal of setting our counterparts up for success has definitely been achieved! This past month we completed 16 Organizational and 4 Direct Support unscheduled maintenance jobs. The welders have

held the spotlight once again this month with the completion of 12 Quadcon (containers) repairs and they received Certificate's of Achievement for previous welding projects. Other

award recipients for this month included the 16 Soldiers that received their mechanic's badges, while SFC Drysdale, SSG Chatman and SPC Costello received recog-

...Other award recipients for this month included the 16 Soldiers that received their mechanic's badges,...

dition for the completion of running 250 Desert Miles. This was LTC Fleckenstein's first award ceremony with Echo Company, but it will definitely not be his last!! Thanks



again to the chain of command for their presence and support.

Another outstanding performance in the month of September was the completion of the Small Arms Range. With myself (1LT Ta-

plin) as OIC, CW3 Betancourt as RSO and SSG Crapper as the NCOIC, it was a top heavy Motor Pool effort, but we really came together as a company to safely qualify over 100 Soldiers on their assigned weapons. Thanks again to everyone on ground and in the rear that contributed to making that mission a success, you all know who you are!

I would also like to take this time to congratulate SPC Torres and SPC Costello on earning Promotable (to

Griffins' Den Continued

Sergeant) status as a result of their performances at the Promotion Board. These young men have exhibited their growing leadership abilities and we are confident that they will be able to handle the ever increasing responsibility. Keep up the great work!

One last shout out to all the NCO's and Soldiers for their continued high level of performance throughout this deployment. I can't thank you all enough for the time, dedication and devotion that has been put forth from every MOS to make our war-time mission happen. I know your families are just as proud as I am, and that they can't wait to have you back....see ya at Hood!

POL Platoon

Here comes the Cavalry!!!!

It was a typical day for SPC Kenneth



Kirkland until the highly anticipated call came over the radio from the tactical operations cell: "Griffin POL, 1st CAV Medevac requests re-fuel on the airfield." The first of the relieving unit's aircraft had finally arrived on Camp Taji, marking the beginning of the Transfer of Authority Phase of our year-long mission in Iraq.

Echo Company POL was more than ready to assist the fellow Texans as they prepared to take over the Ivy Division's Flyers', Fuelers' and Fighters' responsibilities in the Baghdad AO.

Get to know 'em

SGT Noee Hernandez, a

native of Houston, Texas and a three year Army veteran is on his first deployment to Iraq. SGT Hernandez spent a year stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona where he served with the 40th Signal Battalion as a petroleum supply specialist. After a year of fun in the sun of the southwest, he requested a PCS move to Fort Hood in order to be closer to his family and fiancé and to work on the aviation side of his career field. Now married, Noee is looking forward to redeployment so he can spend some time with his wife and two young children, one of which was born in December. He

also has a new secondary MOS, 36H Handyman, which will entail several home improvement projects on the house he recently purchased in Killeen. "I want to go home and work on some of my own area beautification projects and play the homeowner game for a while," mentioned Hernandez. "The project wish-list is already getting out of control, so I'm going to need the assistance of some of my POL buddies to help me pimp my house."

"I want to go home and work on some of my own area beautification projects and play the homeowner game for a while."

SPC Joseph Andre, a native of Tampa, Florida and a former Busch Gardens and Adventure Island employee, has been a member of the POL team for two years. He specializes in fuel systems, quality assurance procedures and Heavy Equipment Mobile Tactical Truck maintenance. When

asked about his immediate post-deployment plans, Andre smiled and immediately mentioned his daughter. "I'm looking forward to going home and seeing my daughter. She'll turn one year old

in November and is working on learn-

ing how to walk. She's still in the crawl stage right now, but she has already begun to stand on her own, so it won't be long." In addition to spending time with family, Andre admits that he's got some catching up to do on the technology scene back in the States. "I've heard that the PS3 is due to be released around the same time as we get back, so I definitely plan on checking it out."

Distribution Platoon

The Distribution Office is now empty, as our containers are packed and two are sealed for the trip home. September was a hectic month, qualifying Soldiers at the M16A2 Range, completing a company wide PT test and getting things packed. The Supply section will make one more trip in order to get replacement boots for some of the Soldiers and we would like to say Thank You for all they have done for us this year. Congratulations to SSG Wilkins and SPC Garcia on completion of running 250 desert miles. Big congratulations also to

SSG Brooks for making the list as a Warrant Officer Candidate. Good luck also goes to SPC Garcia as she takes control of the Company Arms Room. Guard duty continues to stretch the Platoon thin, but our NCO's never hesitate to get down and dirty when the mission dictates. Thanks again to those of you keeping the "home fires burning" we appreciate and love all of the support you have given us.

Birthdays

PFC Carter, A. 1 Sep

SFC Love	3 Sep	CPL Lehman	19 Sep	Take care and God Bless
PFC Cordell	3 Sep	SSG Bigelow	22 Sep	CPT Chad Smith1SG Wilhelmy
PFC Hudson	10 Sep	SPC Matthews	28 Sep	<u>Edited and written by:</u>
SPC Lind	10 Sep			CPT Smith
SSG Hampton	14 Sep			1LT Lisell
SPC Japalucci	14 Sep			1LT Taplin
SGT Regalado	16 Sep			SSG Hurd
SPC Nieder	24 Sep			SPC Ersek

Anniversaries

SPC Andre	2 Sep
SPC Bartholomew	2 Sep
SPC Williams, A.	2 Sep
CPT Smith	4 Sep
PFC Lewin	16 Sep
PFC Hudson	17 Sep
SPC Shoemaker	18 Sep

Message from the Commander

Dear Griffin family,

I am pleased to say that all of our Soldiers will be returning home in less than a month. I know each and every one of you eagerly anticipate that day in Stalker Gym. The Griffins welcome in our new Battalion Commander, with him presenting the company's Soldiers with some well deserved awards. There are many milestones and accomplishments that our Soldiers have achieved while serving in Iraq. You should be proud as I am of their commitment and resolve in achieving our Battalion's and Brigade's goals. We will continue to focus on the job at hand and await our reunion with family and friends.

From the Falcon's Perch

For the first time in many months the temperature has dropped below 100 degrees and once again the weather in Iraq is becoming bearable. It's a little crazy to say that 98 degrees feels very nice, but it's true. We also look forward to celebrating Hispanic Heritage month.

The company has completed the leave cycles and everyone had a chance to take a much deserved

break from work. I still hear the soldiers talking about their wonderful vacations. From exotic travel destinations to wonderful family reunions, every story is special. I can definitely relate to the wonderful stories because my time on EML was a memorable one. The time I spent with my husband and two wonderful kids

break from work. I still hear the soldiers talking

was a great reminder of the sacrifices our families make everyday to support the soldiers while serving in harms way. As you know, our return is just around the corner. Our soldiers and leaders remain focused on the tasks at hand, but soon those great EML stories will be replaced with new stories of fantastic family travels. It is imperative that during our redeployment you help us maintain our soldiers safe. I keep stressing the impor-

"The time I spent with my husband and two wonderful kids was a great reminder of the sacrifices our families make everyday to support the soldiers while serving in harms way."

tance of family values and avoiding irresponsible acts like drinking and driving.

SGT Englemeir was baptized during this month. She devoted almost nine months of training to achieve this milestone and we are happy for her spiritual growth. We also want to wish a very happy birthday to the oldest members of Team Falcon. 1SG Shin is 72, and we are pretty sure that SPC Warren, SGT Holloman, SGT Borgman,

and PVT Freitas are all still under 40.

WARNING

The above listed ages are based on light speculation and may be slightly inaccurate, but by no more than 10%.



Forward Mailing Address
 Rank Your Soldier
 Your Co/2-4 AVN
 Unit 50011
 APO AE 09378-0011

Comments or Suggestions???
 Email: Amy.Buck@AVBDID4.Army.MIL

SI Pat on the Backs continued...

Glad to Have You Back to Our July Re-enlistees!

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

We are preparing to say 'Ta-ta to Taji', pack our bags, and come home. We have been apart for a year. A lot can happen in a year. A lot has happened in a year. Many soldiers here have used the time apart to great advantage. One soldier has spent so much time in the gym that he had to get rid of his original uniforms for a larger size to fit his chest, shoulders, and arms. Other soldiers have gone the other way and lost so much weight they need smaller sizes. These are all great changes. I have seen some soldiers who have made even greater changes on the inside as these others have made on the outside. These soldiers have learned to conquer themselves through submission to God. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Rom 8:37)

We are not the first group to experience this change. A remarkable thing happens during every rotation. Soldiers come to this place in Iraq and see the tremendous religious dedication of the Iraqi people. They realize they need to have a similar zeal for Christ. The transformation is amazing to watch. Soldiers are reading their Bibles and praying for each other. Some soldiers have rededicated their lives to Christ. Some have embraced Christ for the first time. Several weeks ago, three BN soldiers completed their confirmation into the Roman Catholic Church. During the past year, I have assisted in baptizing five soldiers as new Christians. Many attend worship each week which is something they have never done before.

This power of one transformed life is tremendous. The apostle Paul said "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." (Phi. 4:13) On 31 October, many will commemorate the tremendous change that came through one man that stood up for what he believed to be right. In 1517, a priest in a small German village became outraged at the indulgent sale of 1,902,202 years reduction in time spent in purgatory. He listed 95 scriptural reasons why this was wrong and posted them on the door of the chapel for public debate. He refused to back down until someone could show him where he was wrong. No one ever could. His name was Martin Luther and his action in Wittenberg started the reformation of the church. I believe that God is at work making an equally radical transformation of our military and our nation. I believe the agents of this change will be the men and women who have come to the desert of Iraq and encountered God in the process.

Iraqi Culture Gram-

Shi'a Muslims have a more structured religious hierarchy that the Sunnis. The Shi'a clergy is referred to collectively as *ulema* (a single cleric is *alim*). At the pinnacle of the Shi'a religious hierarchy is the Imam, who is a direct descendant of the family of the prophet Muhammad. The Shi'a believe

in twelve *Imams*, each of whom were spiritual and political leaders in the Muslim community. The twelfth Shi'a *Imam*, Muhammad, is known as the Mahdi, who is presently in hiding, waiting for the Last Day, when he will return and restore Islam and justice throughout the world. Although the Twelfth *Imam* is presently absent from sight, he nevertheless remains

the *Imam*, and retains his infallibility and immunity from sin. Unlike among the Sunni, who use the term *Imam* to designate the prayer leader in a mosque, Shi'a reserve the title of Imam for Muhammad's twelve successors.

CPT Woods

S-2